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ABSTRACT

As a male professing feminism to his female elementary education students, an education professor faced problems, philosophically and pragmatically, as he and his students contested feminist theory and pedagogies in class. During the summer of 1986, 62 of his students conducted oral histories of retired or veteran teachers of literacy in the elementary grades. In retrospect, the professor is embarrassed by his patriarchal tone and his ready use of the teachers' oppressed work roles as a potentially desirable state. The construction of the teachers as heroes/heroines now seems a problematic rhetorical solution. Without acknowledging the oppression that they faced daily, the teachers who were interviewed and those who wrote about them, participated in the production of the patriarchy. After completing the oral history workshop but before recognizing how little he had critically analyzed the project, the professor saw himself as a feminist teacher and began organizing his courses as such. However, his students in an advanced graduate seminar refused to engage in feminist dialectical exchanges, one of a series of contentious courses that the professor offered. Even with "feminist intent," his patriarchal and occasionally sexist stances toward his students' work was not deconstructed or even named as an overt part of the workshop. As a male feminist, he can study and learn from feminism as an outsider. As a gay man attempting feminist informed teaching and knowing, the professor faces an additional layer of problems, as well as extra promise. (Contains 46 references.) (RS)

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Is It Crossteaching?: Gay men, Feminist Theory, and Teaching

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Sharing Power in Undergraduate Literacy Classes

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Is It Crossteaching?: Gay Men, Feminist Theory, and Teaching

There may be a mismatch between feminist ideologies and the predominantly female profession of elementary education. As a male professing feminism to his female college students, I faced problems, philosophically and pragmatically, as the students and I contested feminist theory and pedagogies in class. Now I am coming to know that the verb "empower" is an intransitive one, and that my attempts to construe it otherwise are my issues. They involve my ego needs, sexual orientation, and sexist devaluing of my female students. This paper is a critical self-study of my use of feminist pedagogy. It is a learning journey that I hope can teach others. First, a "success story" that started this journey. Second, I present an examination of interpretation in "the success" based on feminist theory. Finally, an examination of my use of feminism is presented.

Oral histories of elementary teachers: A success

During the summer of 1986, sixty-two teachers conducted oral histories of retired or veteran teachers of literacy in the elementary grades. As part of my course requirements, the teachers learned together through oral history interviews how older teachers constructed classroom realities prior to more current oppressive controls from state level curriculum mandates. As the instructor for this graduate workshop in literacy

education, I hoped that by interviewing older teachers, these current teachers would hear stories about teaching literacy when teachers may have made more autonomous decisions about what and how they taught. All sixty-two oral history interviews with female teachers were written into life history narratives by the sixty-two graduate students in education (97% female). The students brought transcripts from their taped interviews and drafts written from their transcripts into class for editing and revision support from peers (Cf. Graves, 1983; Calkins, 1986; 1991; Atwell, 1986 for descriptions of classroom approaches to writers workshop). After several sessions of revision and editing, we published two volumes of narratives, and each writer and each veteran teacher received copies of the books. In addition, the tapes and transcripts of volunteers were collected for archiving in a university women's studies library.

Interpreting what happened

My initial understandings of this experience and the meanings embedded in these sixty-two narratives have been previously published (King, 1991). To construct these meanings, I used the corpus of sixty-two narratives as a type (Chock, 1986). I found consistencies across the different instances of text and narrative. First, the writing teachers **invented textual heroes**. These heroes were often **born to their role**. I wrote:

> The elements of fate, preselection, and "a calling" are frequent, even regular aspects of the narratives. In the second paragraph of a six-page account, Lori writes:

> Little did Billie know the effects of that change on her life and the lives of students to come. She would become a teacher for all teachers to respect. She would leave a long-lasting impression on the many lives she touched (King, 1991, p. 46).

But they also **earned their status** with the successful completion of tests and trials. Attempting to summarize a theme of trials to achievement, I wrote:

> ...teachers in these stories are subjected to a sequence of tests that ultimately measure their worth and establish for them a secure niche as heroes (p. 47).

It was a common trope used by the writers in their textual construction of teaching heroes. Their source of strength appeared to be a **commitment to children** which overrode any personal injustices that they may have suffered, in their work. Writing about her subject Joan, Helen selects the following quote to represent Joan's commitment to children:

> A good teacher knows the student, not just the subject. You teach the child (p. 47).

Another author constructs a parallel comparison between her interview subject, Mary Lou, and Charlotte, the clever spider in E. B. White's Charlotte's Web. Lorrae, the author, writes of Mary Lou:

> ...with each small, glistening section of the web representing a separate dimension of her teaching career. Delicate threads that attach to one another, enabling Mary

> Lou to move gracefully to any area when a child may need help. She forms a foundation in tiny minds and keeps them snared until it is time to set them free like tiny spiders attached to silken balloons sailing away (p. 48).

Their strengths were found in how much they could balance, rather than how much they could lift. Their successes were found in how well they accommodated all participants' needs when they negotiated solutions (p. 49). Yet, the interviewer/authors also write about their recognition that their informants frequently faced oppressive, patriarchal struggles between themselves and their principals. When I reflected on this finding in the text, I was not surprised. I wrote:

> The ways in which these heroines navigate the political mines is, for me, interesting...Reading these accounts of women's struggles to get along in potentially oppressive contexts allows me to re-view the coping they must do. And I realize that working in a female profession is not the same as being a female working in a profession (p. 51).

When I read this now, there are problems with the rhetoric. For example, to examine the patriarchy in this text, I would boldface the words **heroines** (why the feminization?), **get along** (why just get along?), **potentially oppressive** (I was afraid of being perceived as too radical), **allows** (demands). And to the last sentence I want to add "...and not the same as a female working in a female, but not feminist profession."

In their narratives, there are also stories which recounted the informants' creative and subversive ways of dealing with power and control. However, I finish off the manuscript with an embarrassed analysis of my role in making this experience happen. I call myself Captain Marvel (p. 59). The textual confession of my patriarchal stance, however, did little to defuse its influence on my interpretations of this experience. First, an examination of my analysis of the teachers' writing about teachers. Again, this part of the current paper comes from King (1991) in a section where I try to understand the significance of the themes I had found in the teachers' writing, and have just described in this manuscript.

Reconstructing an interpretation

When I reported the self effacing heroes, it seemed to fit with what I was then reading from Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) and Gilligan (1982). Gilligan suggests that "women [can] feel excluded from direct participation in society, [that] they see themselves as subject to a consensus or judgement made and enforced by the men on whose protection and support they depend" (p. 67). This perception can lead to "...a sense of vulnerability that impedes these women from taking a stand...[a] 'susceptibility' to adverse judgements by others, which stems from [their] lack of power" (p. 66). At the time as I was thinking about the teachers' writing, Gilligan and Belenky, et al. lead me to an understanding of the disabling effects of marginalizing women's meanings, lives, and language. Further,

this theorizing made a strong case for the existence of a female underclass created by sociosexual oppression, and maintained, at least in part, by the internalized response of the oppressed.

Gilligan goes on to characterize women's disenfranchisement as "drifting along and riding it out..." creating the effect of "experience of women caught in opposition between selfishness and responsibility. Describing a life lived in response, guided by the perception of others' needs, they can see no way of exercising control without risking an assertion that seems selfish and hence morally dangerous" (p. 143). This, too, made sense to me. From my writing at that time Gilligan's arguments seemed

> ...to create a willingness for and a tolerance for ambiguity, and a readiness to question the idea that there is a single way to [teach] and that differences are not always a matter of better or worse' (Gilligan, 1982, p. 143) ...For me, this seems a ready stance to engage in the multiple perspective taking required in critical approaches to literacy" (King, 1991, p. 9).

My ready use of the teachers' oppressed work roles as a potentially desirable state now embarrasses me. For Gilligan, this paradox between selflessness and self neglect is cast in a contrast of the hierarchial and webbed social relationships that contextualize women's moral development. Webbed social structuring relies on interconnectedness and a wish to be at the center of that connection, accompanied by fear of being at the

edge. Despite perceived differences in power distribution, things will be fair, and everyone will be responded to and included. No one will be left out or hurt. It seems as if awareness of power hegemony is a fact of life, and once acknowledged, set adrift. In contrast, hierarchial models of social relations suggests inequality, separateness, fear of others and closeness. Belenky, et al. (1986) present similar ideas in a taxonomy of women's ways of knowing. One way to know is received knowledge. For most men, knowing from others, or received knowledge, is often based on identification with authority. But women, who usually do not encounter other women as authorities, tend to view themselves outside the dichotomous relationship of "Authority-right-we" (p. 44). Of course, the women who were teachers and students in the workshop I have described, did listen to and learn from each other, but according to Belenky, et al., it is with a connected perspective, rather than one that is dichotomous and separate.

That was then. In a second pass of interpretation, the interviewer/writers' construction of heroes now seems a problematic rhetorical solution for their problem structuring or goal setting in their writing tasks (Flower & Hayes, 1981). While heroes are self effacing, they are also rugged individualists. This seems to be at odds with connected knowing. Heroes seem to be "morally dangerous" individuals. But conceptualizing teachers as individuals may be more reflective of teachers' real working lives. While teachers in the elementary

grades spend a large portion of their days in social situations with their students, there is minimal interaction with their peers (cf. Robbins, 1990, on the contexture of schools).

Heroes and self analysis

At this point it is a little late to say "Whoops! Did I say 'heroes'?" In fact, my imposition of a heroic metaphor in the initial analysis (King, 1991) is one that stands in a re-view of the stories as a corpus of individual data (Chock, 1986). What is troublesome now was my ready acceptance of this metaphor as an unproblematic one. During our workshop together, the teachers wrote about their interview subjects, other teachers who had suffered indignities, and whose work had been oppressively regulated, and whose efforts had been frequently misunderstood. Yet, in my analysis of their writing about the older teachers, the textual characters that the writers recreated in the narratives seldom questioned such morally unjust treatments. Neither did the writers, who also placed themselves in their evolving narratives, often question these textualized injustices. This lack of critical analysis remains problematic for me. It is conceivable that by writing the incidents into the narratives, the authors are voicing their opposition. But for the most part, the heroes and their literary champions work within the patriarchal oppression that the writers carefully describe.

How to understand this dissonance has been a complex process. Hirschman (1970) suggests that oppressed participants can either voice opposition to a condition or exist within the

context. The decision depends largely on their perceptions that voicing may lead to any real change. I see the teachers doing both simultaneously. Within the context of the narratives, both the authors and their subjects did voice resistance to control. What is not clear is the extent to which these professionals actively resisted domination in context, or even felt the need to do so. It is also interesting to me how I valorized this self effacing approach to dealing with oppression in contrast to more vocal opposition. In our workshop I remarked on the strength of these evolving characters, when the interviewers began crafting narratives from their taped data. I remember that I used that same perspective of valorization when I sat at a large table, categorizing themes, tropes and narrative episodes from their writing. I remember musing that quiet nurturers were probably the best kind of caregivers for youth. Now after reading Heilbrun's (1988) Writing a woman's life, and some reflection, I'm not so comfortable with self denying caregivers. Heilbrun offers:

> To denounce women for their shrillness and stridency is another way of denying then any right to power. Unfortunately, power is something that women abjure once they perceive the great difference between the lives possible to men and women, and the violence necessary to men to maintain their position of authority...But however unhappy the concept of power and control may make idealistic women, they delude themselves if they believe that the world

> and the condition of the oppressed can be changed without acknowledging it (p. 16).

Without owning the oppression that they faced daily, the teachers who were interviewed and those who wrote about them, participated in the production of the patriarchy. Of course, it is much more comfortable naming these conditions in a manuscript.

"Inventing" feminist pedagogy

When I realized that the students in the oral history project and I had created a productive learning space, and before I had considered how little critical analysis we had done of the that space, I was buoyed by "my success." At that point, I saw myself as a feminist teacher, and began organizing for courses as such. These shifts in pedagogy were not smooth ones, and a wide range of responses to the relationships between people and content characterized tcoursework. One example was an advanced graduate seminar in feminist deconstruction of literacy practices as they occur in elementary classrooms. In readings and in our teaching we were to consider the contribution of gender, both as a literary theme and as a teaching issue. In class, we would use reader response (Bleich, 1978) to interpret writings with feminist themes (eg. Hurston, 1985; hooks, 1989; Bateson, 1989). I had also planned to use critical theory to interrogate our interpretations of these texts (Gilbert, 1989; Long, 1986; 1987; Walkerdine, 1990), in order to review classroom practices from a critical feminist stance (Weiler, 1988).

This is where the breaks locked. The eleven doctoral students in literacy, all female, did not accept Gilbert's (1988) argument that elementary teachers play a role in the social construction of gendered readings of children's literature and children's own writing. Long's (1987; 1986) proposal for systematic examination of interpretive authority was not discussed. They did not want to talk about it. And Walkerdine's (1990) depiction of young boys' sexist bullying of their preschool teacher brought embarrassed laughter and spoken disbelief into the class. But Walkerdine's textual representation of the teacher and her seemingly passive response brought no reaction, either critical or supportive. I was frustrated, disappointed, and angry that they would not engage in feminist dialectical exchange. They shifted the focus of the course to more effective ways of teaching the content of language arts.

I took the students' refusal as personal rejection, and in a defensive posture decided that because these women were elementary teachers, they couldn't engage in a critical deconstruction of social context. I thought through metaphors of limited intellect, codependent social relationships, lack of ambition, and several other theaters of pathology. My invitations to write for publication were ignored, and the students claimed their rights to restructure class, but in the direction of teacher effectiveness and teaching aproaches.

The doctoral students' rejection of critical feminism is but one instance in a series of contentious courses that I offered. What the different instances of student resistance to my different classes share has been crucial for my understanding of teaching, my teaching, and feminist teaching. All of the situations have involved almost exclusively female elementary teachers, either in current service or in preparation. For the most part, they were representative of the demographics of the social group of elementary teachers. They were mostly white, middle class, child oriented, and fairly apolitical. I do not mean to essentialize a professional group. Yet, there is a consistent body of demographic and ethnographic literature on this educational niche and its participants (Acker, 1989; Spencer, 1986; Sugg, 1978; Weiler, 1988).

Another consistency was the teachers' uniform resistance to self selected learning and their discomfort with forming evaluation for their own work and the work of others in the class (Danforth, King, & Perez, 1993). And a final consistency was my angry response and hurt at being rejected. I recognize now that when I internalized the rejection, I projected it onto the females in my classes, and onto female teaching culture. The examples of dysfunctional relationships in classes are many. The contrast between the students' ready acceptance of the original oral history project and the denial and resistance I experienced as a feminist professor are important lessons for me. One lesson has been a shift in teaching approaches toward a feminist style

(Schneidewind, 1985) and less emphasis on critical feminist content (Weiler, 1988). However, a source of difficulty may reside in my use of feminist theory, in general.

Interpretation and patriarchy in widening contexts

The importance of encouraging teachers in critical examination of their teaching and beliefs about their teaching was brought home to me in Gilbert's (1989) writing about feminist space in elementary classrooms. My original intent in conducting the oral history workshop I had with the teachers was to engage them in student centered learning in a workshop format. An underlying agenda that I had was to create an occasion for teachers' transformation of their teaching toward student-centered literacy, in a workshop context. In this workshop that was our graduate course, we defined literacy as collecting and interpreting oral histories. We read these together in the process of creating texts for outside audiences. This approach has also been used effectively in elementary classrooms (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986; 1991; Graves, 1983). In fact, student generated texts created in a workshop format are cornerstones of the current surge called whole language. The reading component of a whole language approach to literacy involves individual response to literature (Willensky, 1990). In a discussion writer based classrooms, where students' written texts are used as pedagogical texts, Gilbert (1988) suggests:

> The concept of the literary [student] text as a natural, creative, honest expression from a gifted individual

> obscures the process of production of the text, presenting only a holistic, completed and apparently personal, spontaneous interpretation of human experience (p. 197).

Gilbert is arguing for an acknowledgement of the ideological frames invoked by writers during their writing processes. I would argue that the processes of text production were not only visible in our workshop, but, in fact, they constituted the curriculum. And, while the notion of spontaneous emergence of whole text, like Minerva from Zeus's head, can have been critiqued with our additional knowledge about our process approach to writing, Gilbert's point about the "honest expression of a gifted individual" continues to raise problematic interpretations for textual realities that are actually socially constructed in writing workshops. She continues:

> The assumption that authors portray 'truths' which are not ideologically constructed is displayed as a social convention privileging particular cultural practices...Authority of this sort is demonstrated to be a patriarchal practice -- 'truth' is seen to be male; 'creativity' is seen to be male (pp. 197-8).

While this critique is less apparent in homogeneous social settings, like a group of white, female, elementary teachers, the interpretation issues remain serious ones for the use of this approach as a classroom method (my transformative agenda). For me, Gilbert suggests that individual student texts, accepted into classroom discourses uncritically, recreates a reality based on

authority, or patriarchal truths. Long's (1986, 1987) writing on cultural authority and the interpretation of literature begs the question of whose interpretation counts in classrooms? If interpretation, or reader response, is the pedagogical move associated with students' writing and self-selected reading, then the act of textual interpretation itself must be interrogated.

It is the individual students' construction and defense of literature products, texts and responses, that trouble Gilbert (1988) and me. Yet, from a whole language, or writing process perspective, these are the very pedagogies thought to be empowering for all learners. In fact, the agenda of our oral history workshop was empowerment of the participating teachers to the point where they would try the course pedagogy with their own elementary students. But according to Gilbert (1989b):

> I would suggest that rather than empowering young women, these discourses [reader response in workshop classrooms] encourage the construction of stereotypical female subject positions which limit women's [I would add everyone's] understanding of their textual inscription and encourage them to see such inscription as 'natural' and 'normal' (p. 263).

Of course, the construction of marginalizing text and response to text need not be the case. And in fairness to Gilbert, this seems to be a purpose for her writing. Products can be critiqued, processes examined, and "naturalness" deconstructed. Gilbert's concerns (and mine for the coursework) are that such

interactions over text are not axiomatic in whole language or other student-centered pedagogies. Even with "feminist intent", my patriarchal and occasionally sexist stances toward my students' work was not deconstructed or even named as an overt part of our workshop (cf. Simon & Lewis, 1986, for an example of naming that did occur). My current resolution of not teaching this content is not satisfactory.

Men with/in feminism

At the time we started the oral history project together, it seemed like a reasonable way to get my students involved in an examination of their teaching and their concepts of literacy. Now the project and my analysis of it have become a bit of a rash. Part of the rash has to do with the heightened color from embarrassment. At this point, I think that the workshop itself was a healthy place for teachers' self examination. (Though, I do admit to wishing for more indepth reflexivity for all of us). It is my use of the experience as an opportunity for textualizing that is now problematic. In so doing, I've become embarrassed about noncritical analysis of my own part in the workshop and its writeup. But I think I've done enough of what van Maanen (1988) calls the confessional tale.

The other part of the rash has to do with the itch that accompanies knowing that something isn't quite right. To understand my interpretive dilemmas with the oral history narratives, I've done some reading and some "trying-to-understanding". When I turned the course into a workshop, I made

a place for the participants' self examination, and increased the reflexive utility (Dippo, 1991) of the course experience. Working together on creating and analyzing women's lives brought us all to feminist awareness of the issues and themes that were shot through the narratives. The oral history project allowed me to own feminism in myself. But when I expected and directed that change, I assumed an advocacy stance that problematizes the relationships between teacher, researcher, feminist, and friend. This is, to say the least, problematic. Advocacy argues on behalf of less powerful constituencies to negotiate their own development (Schensul and Schensul, 1979). But my efforts on a teacher's behalf could also be construed as my attempts to situate the concerns of the marginalized teacher into the existing power structure (my class), or the appropriation of their issues to enhance my own stance as "the teacher." It seems that empowerment cannot help but enhance the positioning of the one who steps aside to make it possible. Paradoxically, these appropriations are justified and tolerated by the privileged group (me) as long as they don't threaten the basic framework of the dominant social system that created such hegemony. The questsion that I ask now is "Empowerment to what point?"

It is also a problem to now use the same feminist ideologies that guided my teaching to understand the women in my class. Heath (1987a) quotes Barthes in conversation: "you study what you desire or fear" (p. 6). In a chapter titled "Men in Feminism," I suspect Heath was enamored of the quote for reasons

like my own. Yet, neither desire nor fear are innocent social constructions. Men can write about feminist issues but according to Heath, these are not feminist writings.

> ...it is just that they depend on learning from feminism. This is, I believe, the most any man can do today: to learn and try to write or talk or act [or teach] in response to feminism, and so to try not in any way to be anti-feminist, [or] supportive of the old oppressive structures...But who am I to say this? But still, can't I say that this seems to me how we should [might] see it, part of the ethics of sexual difference today? (1987b, p. 9).

In choosing the quote, I signal agreement with Heath. I also share the self doubt in his question of self identity. For a man to "know" feminism seems a very nonfeminist statement. It is the objectivism of lives not lived. It is male oppression. Like Heath, I prefer to be "with feminism" and with him reject the appropriation and violence necessary to be "in" feminism. For me, its more like an apprenticeship, studying with it, while simultaneously studying it.

Being male isn't a necessarily negative condition for also being a feminist. In fact, as a male feminist, I can study with and learn from feminism as an outsider, an other, a "wanna be". This distancing can be a healthy interpretive lens. But the distance does impede any analysis done with feminist interpretation. Heath (1987b) suggests that "...the problem for men, 'men in feminism,' has little...to do with feminist theory

but much to do with the representation of feminism for men" (p. 44). It is not, then, the classic male response of "What does woman want? What does feminism want?" This is oppositional and unproductive; as is Heath's characterization of the pathetic response "Why am I excluded, losing ground, marginalized, left out?" (p. 44). Rather, the question I hear is what is feminism for men? "Or, how do I change, who am I, if I listen to and respond to feminism, if I understand with its understanding?" (p. 44).

My feminist stance is neither an easy position, nor one with which I expect to become more comfortable. Like the rash, it begs for more attention each time I scratch the surface. Yet, there are some commonalities between men with feminism and women in feminism. It seems that women also must come to feminism. Women become feminists. It is a social and political reaction to our culture. It is possible and true that some women do not choose to be feminists. So that it is not axiomatic with being female. To borrow Lather (1991) once more, postfeminist masculinity is understood by making maleness a problem (or "problematized") in a gender sensitized look at relationships in educational contexts. This kind of awareness and interpretation must become part of classroom milieu.

In "Critical Cross-Dressing; Male Feminists and the Woman of the Year," Showalter (1987) discusses the role of males in feminist literary criticism. She suggests "The way into feminist criticism, for the male theorist, must involve a confrontation

with what might be implied by reading [teaching] as a man and with a questioning or surrender of paternal privileges" (p. 127). While I agree with Showalter and suggest that her argument generalizes beyond literary criticism, I must admit to a bit of a "Catch 22." It seems to me that the one theoretical and critical social frame from which to analyze male positioning in our culture, and specifically in the production of teachers as cultural mediators, is feminism.

The problem of gay men in feminism

The way I understand my use of feminism is as an act of appropriation. I think that as a gay man, and at that time living as a heterosexual man, I used feminist critical theory in a defensive way. It was an approximation. It was the place I came the closest to being openly gay. When my students rejected feminism in my teaching, they seemed to be rejecting the small part of me that had a found a way to articulate difference, on the path toward better understanding of my own sexuality. I continue to think that appropriation of feminist critical space, especially by gay men, remains a constant possibility. But even that caution is not enough to describe the complexities that occur when gay men use feminist critical space for work on masculinity. Gay critical rhetoric is young, scarce, and problematic. But there are a few spaces where critical theory has been applied to gay culture and the way the critique is used is helpful in understanding the rift that developed between my students and me.

Writing in the field of art criticism, Owens (1992) seeks to understand the gulf between gay male intellectuals and feminist theory. Owens explains the difficulties men have had using feminist theory by offering a two part relationship. First, the gulf is created around the ritualization of homophobia, when it is used as a mechanism of social control. Following arguments by Sedgewick (1985) and Foucault (1978), Owens suggests that there is utility in viewing homosexual men as outsiders or "others." Then, secondly, given the public perception that all men are, or should be, heterosexual, they can be blackmailed with accusations of homosexuality. The success of appropriating sexual orientation as a lever for social control depends on creating and intensifying the crimminality as well as the feminization of homosexuality. While such homophobic practices are most certainly oppressive to gay men, Owens suggests the more pervasive influence is in regulating the behavior of <u>all</u> men. "The imputing of homosexual motive to every male relationship is thus 'an immensely potent tool...for manipulation of every form of power that [is] refracted through the gender system--that is, in European society, of virtually every form of power' (Sedgewick, pp. 88-89)" (pp 221). I would also reinforce the obvious, but no less significant point that homophobic social control invests heavily in misogynistic practice by feminizing homosexuality. But, homosexual resistance to imposed masculinity, as demonstrated through "gender bending," also trades in related misogyny.

The same kind of gender bullying is likewise revealed in Pronger's (1990) examination of the homoeroticism of athletic competition and the commodification of that event structure in popular culture. Pronger contends that homoeroticism in American sport culture is purposeful and is manipulated to sell products, including sports itself. He uses an interview study of elite gay athletes as a springboard to examine the paradoxical message of ultra masculinity combined with overt homoerotic mass market imaging that is directed to presumably heterosexual men. As with the example provided by Owens, the double message is that on one hand, homosexuality, in the form of homoerotic images, is acknowledged as desirable for mass market and exploited to sell products. On the other hand, homosexuals entrance as full participants in athletic arenas threatens to devalue the appropriated images. In borrowing into female cultural space and in owning our rights to compete, we disrupt expectancies.

A related example of paradoxical masculinity (Pronger, 1990) is Hopcke's (1991) discussion of S/M gay sexuality. He uses the constructs of paradox and homophobia to account for the phobic responses to radical gay sexuality. Because "patriarchy has alienated men...from their bodies" (p. 72), sexual gratification can be commodified and made contingent. Through contingency, sex can be used as reward tokens for men's compliance with desired social control. Any sexuality that promotes the physicality of sex is likely to be construed as deviant, because it has the potential to bypass the sanctioned sexual rituals in the dominant

culture. Sexual gratification outside the appropriated space of "sex as a reward" threatens a system based on the objectification of sexual experience.

Hopcke's argument is made in the same theme as that of Owens and Pronger. I see that theme a gay and lesbians consciously owning the transgressive quality of homosexual positioning that we can occupy in relation to the dominant culture. We can participate in critical analysis of our subordinated status. Gay identified social practices <u>can</u> be used as disruptive, phenomenological windows from which to view how our sexuality has been appropriated and crimminalized in order to perpetuate patriarchal, heterosexist distribution of sexual commodities.

The similarity in all three of these examples is a radicalized interpretation of our social practices. Similar arguments have been made relative to gay political activism (D'Emilio, 1989) and radical gay ideologies (Mitchell, 1980). Yet, the interrogation of how we use our cultural spaces to represent ourselves is relatively new. In this paper, I use feminist theory to understand a pattern of dissonance in pedagogy, that was intentionally based on that same theory. As a gay man attempting feminist informed teaching and knowing, there seems an additional layer of problem, as well as extra promise. When I used the problem framing of an oppressed group, in this case women, while I represented the group of oppressors, is to say the least complex. Yet, my relationship to the category "male gender" is itself problematic, and no less complex.

Historically, gay men have often appropriated "female space" in acts of gesture , dress, language, as well as in occupations and in other arenas. Gay men's appropriation of females' cultural space has been troubling. It is reasonable to expect that female feminists would resist yet one more "take over" from men, especially from gay men. After all, who makes the interpretive call as to whether gay male feminists are resisting patriarchy and heterosexism with critical use of feminist ideologies, or simply taking up the intellectual and critical space that women have carved? But in another interpretive pass, once outside a limited commodities metaphor, men's assumption of females' perspective seems a likely move away from essentializing lives for both men and women.

I think we have yet to open a discourse on gay and lesbian theorizing, let alone one about queer pedagogy. So while I wait for investigations of queer pedagogy, based on the politicization of sexual orientation, and grounded in gay and lesbian thinking about teaching, feminism remains a likely model. But studying teaching with feminist theory will remain complex. A critic of a previous paper I had written on this topic commented "It seems that the writer's need to empower will never be fulfilled...his attempts to 'become the learner' (in order to teach) on one hand and his discounting of females on the other will sabotage his mission. His sexist attitude will always cause him to 'miss the mark' of creating productive learning space." This would be true

if I couldn't learn from the people who struggle to learn with me.

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